



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 31, 2020

Coronavirus Follies: Dems Pushed Reusable Shopping Bags, Which SPREAD Disease

It has long been warned that the reusable shopping bags Democrat state governments have pressured people to use were disease vectors. And years ago already, a study indicated that plastic-bag bans lead to a 50-percent increase in food-borne illness deaths. This threat takes on a new dimension, however, with the Wuhan virus crisis. In fact, some supermarkets are “banning” reusable bags and are providing paper or plastic ones gratis to protect employees and customers from the virus.



The kicker is that “single-use” bag bans were *never* necessary in the United States and, contrary to myth, accomplish nothing positive environmentally.

Having been a child in the '70s, I remember when paper supermarket bags were standard. Then we were told to *switch to plastic* because we were supposedly cutting down too many trees. It was environmentalist hype.

Now we're told that plastic is polluting the oceans, so we have to transition away from “single-use” bags altogether. It's more environmentalist hype.

This said, states with “bans” will still let you have such a bag — though it may have to be paper — as long as you pay a “tax” masquerading as a fee. (Akin to another “sin tax,” Big Brother's message is: You can sin, as long as we can make money off it!)

Yet the bags aren't necessarily single-use. For example, writing that in pre-ban days she'd take a “bag home and use it again,” *American Thinker's* Andrea Widburg [explains](#), “If it was paper, I used it for book covers, storing annual tax-relevant documents, wrapping packages destined for UPS, and holding recycling. If it was plastic, I used it for bathroom garbage bags, packing school lunches, padding breakables for shipping, etc.”

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While many other Americans (including yours truly) also reuse these bags, banning them causes more than just inconvenience. As the *Independent* [reported](#) in 2014, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania “found that a ban on plastic bags in San Francisco in 2007 may have increased deaths from food poisoning by over 50 per cent in a year”; this amounts to “between 5.4 and 15.8 additional fatalities in a year from illnesses caused by food bugs.”

The researchers added that later “bans by other cities in California appear to be associated with similar effects. This suggests that the plastic bag ban generated serious public health problems.”

Now Wuhan-flu fears have escalated the concerns. As SFGate.com [reports](#), stores “are worried that



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reusable bags might endanger both employees and customers because they could potentially transmit” the Wuhan virus.

Grocery chains “Safeway and Albertsons say if you bring your own bag, employees will not be able to touch them or fill them, so you’ll have to do your own bagging,” the site also informs....The policy is not unique to supermarkets. Trader Joe’s, Total Wine and More, Target and dollar stores are reportedly following similar procedures.”

“Some stores also are reserving the right to decline customers’ reusable bags and give them paper or plastic bags at no charge,” the site continues.

This problem was entirely avoidable, as bag bans were wholly unnecessary. As I [reported](#) in “Why the Greentopians Would Destroy the Earth,” trees are a renewable “crop” and lumber-company-owned lands are spectacularly managed. They have to be. These businesses only have so much acreage and, as with a farmer, mismanaging their land (e.g., not replanting effectively) would put them out of business.

Our nation’s current tree glee reflects this, too: We have *more forested land now than 100 years ago*.

As for plastic, almost all of it entering the oceans comes from five Asian nations, with China being the worst offender, and virtually none of it (one to three percent) originates with the United States. Moreover, no plastic you *dispose of properly* will end up in waterways.

Another little known fact: A [study indicated](#) that 46 percent of ocean-polluting plastic comprises *discarded fishing nets*. In other words, our bag bans will do nothing to improve the seas.

They do much to spread disease, though, and this illustrates the folly of statist legislators in ignorance. Chinese sage Confucius once said, “Wisdom is, when you know something, knowing that you know it; and when you do not know something, knowing that you do not know it.”

Lacking wisdom (and humility), our leftist legislators don’t know what they don’t know. Even more damning is why you shouldn’t expect a single “single-use” bag ban’s rescission: They don’t care, either.



Image: Amex Photo via iStock / Getty Images Plus

Selwyn Duke (@SelwynDuke) has written for The New American for more than a decade. He has also written for The Hill, Observer, The American Conservative, WorldNetDaily, American Thinker, and many other print and online publications. In addition, he has contributed to college textbooks published by Gale-Cengage Learning, has appeared on television, and is a frequent guest on radio.



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